

00058

1961/01/28

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

4-12

January 28, 1961

Memorandum of Discussion on Cuba
Cabinet Room, January 28, 1961

Present: The President, The Vice President, The Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Assistant Secretary Mann, Assistant Secretary Nitze, Mr. Tracy Barnes, Mr. McGeorge Bundy

The meeting began with a description of the present situation in Cuba by the Director of Central Intelligence. His judgment expressed without dissent was that Cuba is now for practical purposes a Communist-controlled state. The two basic elements in the present situation are a rapid and continuing build-up of Castro's military power, and a great increase also in popular opposition to his regime.

The United States has undertaken a number of covert measures against Castro, including propaganda, sabotage, political action, and direct assistance to anti-Castro Cubans in military training. A particularly urgent question is the use to be made of a group of such Cubans now in training in Guatemala, who cannot remain indefinitely where they are.

The present estimate of the Department of Defense is that no course of action currently authorized by the United States Government will be effective in reaching the agreed national goal of overthrowing the Castro regime. Meanwhile, the Department of State sees grave political dangers to our position throughout the Western hemisphere in any overt military action not authorized and supported by the Organization of American States.

Approved for FO-850
Date: 1-28-61

After considerable discussion, the following proceedings were authorized by the President:

1. A continuation and accentuation of current activities of the Central Intelligence Agency, including increased propaganda, increased political action and increased sabotage. Continued overflights for these purposes were specifically authorized.

2. The Defense Department, with CIA, will review proposals for the active deployment of anti-Castro Cuban forces on Cuban territory, and the results of this analysis will be promptly reported to the President. *yes* *responsible*

3. The Department of State will prepare a concrete proposal for action with other Latin American countries to isolate the Castro regime and to bring against it the judgment of the Organization of American States. It is expected that this proposal may involve a commitment of the President's personal authority behind a special mission or missions to such Latin American leaders as Lleras, Betancourt and Quadros.

Finally, it was agreed that the United States must make entirely clear that its position with respect to the Cuban Government is currently governed by its firm opposition to Communist penetration of the American Republics, and not by any hostility to democratic social revolution and economic reform. The President intends to deal with this matter himself in the State of the Union Address.

The President particularly desires that no hint of these discussions reach any personnel beyond those most immediately concerned with it in the Executive Branch.

h.b.b-1
McGeorge Bundy

18K.

TRANSCRIPTION FOLLOWS

The White House
Washington

[Excised]

January 28, 1961

[Excised]

Memorandum of Discussion on Cuba
Cabinet Room, January 28, 1961

Present: The President, The Vice President, The Secretary of State, the Secretary of

Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Assistant Secretary Mann, Assistant Secretary Nitze, Mr. Tracy Barnes, Mr. McGeorge Bundy

The meeting began with a description of the present situation in Cuba by the Director of Central Intelligence. The judgment expressed without dissent was that Cuba is now for practical purposes a Communist-controlled state. The two basic elements in the present situation are a rapid and continuing build-up of Castro's military power, and a great increase also in popular opposition to his regime.

The United States has undertaken a number of covert measures against Castro, including propaganda, sabotage, political action, and direct assistance to anti-Castro Cubans in military training. A particularly urgent question is the use to be made of a group of such Cubans now in training in Guatemala, who cannot remain indefinitely where they are.

The present estimate of the Department of Defense is that no course of action currently authorized by the United States Government will be effective in reaching the agreed national goal of overthrowing the Castro regime. Meanwhile, the Department of State sees grave political dangers to our position throughout the Western hemisphere in any overt military action not authorized and supported by the Organization of American States.

After considerable discussion, the following proceedings were authorized by the President:

1. A continuation and accentuation of current activities of the Central Intelligence

Agency, including increased propaganda, increased political action and increased sabotage. Continued overflights for these purposes were specifically authorized.

2. The Defense Department, with CIA, will review proposals for the active deployment of anti-Castro Cuban forces on Cuban territory, and the results of this analysis will be promptly reported to the President.

3. The Department of State will prepare a concrete proposal for action with other

Latin American countries to isolate the Castro regime and to bring against it the judgment of the Organization of American States. It is expected that this proposal may involve a commitment of the President's personal [sic] authority behind a special mission or missions to such Latin American leaders as Lleras, Betancourt and Quadros.

Finally, it was agreed that the United States must make entirely clear that its position with respect to the Cuban Government is currently governed by its firm opposition to Communist penetration of the American Republics, and not by any hostility to democratic social revolution and economic reform. The President intends to deal with this matter himself in the State of the Union Address.

The President particularly desires that no hint of these discussions reach any personnel beyond those most immediately concerned with in [sic] the Executive Branch.

McGeorge Bundy

[Classification Excised]